Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CSCE COMMISSION HEARINGS ON THE SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS

1. BILL LUERS (EUR), SENATOR PACKWOOD, SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN (JEFFORDS, LEHMAN, GILMAN, WAXMAN) AND PRIVATE WITNESSES, INCLUDING MRS. SOLZHENITSYN, GAVE TESTIMONY TODAY BEFORE THE CSCE COMMISSION ON SOVIET TREATMENT OF THE HELSINKI MONITORING GROUP. THE FOCUS OF THE HEARING WAS ON HOW THE US SHOULD RESPOND TO SOVIET DISREGARD OF THEIR COMMITMENTS UNDER THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AS THEY PROCEED WITH TRIALS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS. THE MOOD OF THE COMMISSIONERS WAS ONE OF FRUSTRATION WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION, RATHER THAN CRITICISM OF THE ADMINISTRATION. MOST MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION IN ATTENDANCE (PELL, BINGHAM, FENWICK, SIMON, BUCHANAN) VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED LINKING PROGRESS ON SALT TO THE TRIALS. SENATOR PELL, IN PARTICULAR, PRAISED THE ADMINISTRATION FOR GOING
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AHEAD WITH THE GENEVA TALKS THIS WEEK. THE EXCEPTIONS WERE SENATOR DOLE WHO ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT CALLING FOR SUSPENSION OF THE SALT TALKS PENDING SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE FINAL ACT (DOLE HAD INTRODUCED JULY 10 A RESOLUTION TO THIS EFFECT AS WELL AS CALLING FOR SUSPENSION OF EXCHANGES AND REEVALUATION OF US PARTICIPATION

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IN THE FINAL ACT. THE RESOLUTION WAS REFERRED TO THE SFRC.) AND CONGRESSMAN JEFFORDS WHO ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT TO INFORM THE SOVIETS THAT VIOLATIONS OF THE FINAL ACT WOULD INFLUENCE THE CONTENT AND EXTENT OF STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR. OTHERS CALLED FOR A DECLARATION, IN CONCERT WITH OUR ALLIES, OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS AS NULL AND VOID (PACKWOOD, DOLE) OR THE SUSPENSION OF EXCHANGES (DOLE).

2. MRS. SOLZHENITSYN'S TESTIMONY WAS PARTICULARLY MOVING AS SHE DESCRIBED THE ORDEAL OF OFFICIAL REPRESSION FACED BY SOVIET ACTIVISTS SUCH AS ALEXANDER GINZBERG. SHE REFRAINED, HOWEVER FROM SUGGESTING ANY SECIFIC COURSE OF OF ACTION.

3. LUER S TESTIMONY EMPHASIZED THAT BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SALT TO US AND WORLD INTERESTS, PROGRESS COULD NOT BE LINKED TO OTHER ISSUES; THAT A SALT AGREE-MENT WOULD NOT BE BASED ON TRUST OF THE SOVIET UNION, BUT ON OUR ASSESSMENT OF US AND SOVIET NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE AGREEMENT'S VERIFIABILITY; AND THAT NULLIFICATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET ACTIONS WOULD NOT BE WISE. HE DECLINED TO DESCRIBE POSSIBLE FURTHER ACTIONS WHICH THE US MIGHT TAKE, BUT NOTED THAT THE ENTIRE RANGE OF US-SOVIET REALTIONSHIPS (EXCLUDING SALT)
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WAS OPEN FOR REVIEW. CHRISTOPHER

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